a narrow passage intended for special guards. In my time, however, the passage had been made part of the circular space. There were two bunks with straw sacks in the passage and four plank cots in the tower proper. When the tower was overcrowded, from two to four additional straw sacks were put on the flagstone floor.

In the tower I met a few comrades from Room 12. Misha was among them, and I was shocked when I saw his emaciated face. The tower was isolated from the rest of the prison, but we could exchange scribbled notes with other prisoners with the aid of the corridor cleaners—usually petty felons.

Mistreatment and beating went on in the wards for common criminals and criminal-political prisoners and especially in the row of those sentenced to death. Each morning the corridors echoed with curses, blows, and screams. In addition, the prison was plagued by hunger and lice. For a month all prisoners had been deprived of any food except bread and water—a pound of bread per day and a dipper of dirty tepid water. In June, soup was added to the ration—a stinking, turbid liquid with nondescript rubbish swimming in it. I tasted it on the first day but threw up, and during the following two months I, like many others, had nothing but half-baked bread and abominable water.

Lice and other bugs multiplied with unbelievable rapidity. The planks of the cots, the cracks in the walls and floor, and the frames of the windows were full of bugs, while lice appeared in waves from nowhere after dusk. We spent most of our time fighting the vermin. Some common criminals collected bugs and lice in bottles and matchboxes. Contests were arranged to see who could catch the most in a week. We tried to clear our tower by exterminating the vermin systematically, inch after inch. But some cracks in the walls were beyond our reach, and new waves of lice descended on us again and again.

By now the investigation of my case was completed. Together with Misha, Chilkovich and his wife, Alexandrova, and the student who had kept the party files, I was charged with participating in the S-D organization and the case was referred to the military court.

Two other tower inmates were awaiting trial under similar charges. Others faced more serious accusations.

Nikolai Komarov, a likable, cheerful youth, a member of the S-R party, faced a death penalty for a holdup of which he knew nothing. The holdup took place at dusk, the witnesses had not noticed the faces of the two gunmen, but an elderly lady gave a vivid description of the checkered cap worn by one of them, and Nikolai's cap happened to fit the description.

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